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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7997

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SIPDIS

STATE FOR EUR/WE, EUR/RPM:CDORLE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/12/2018  
TAGS: [NATO](#) [MOPS](#) [MARR](#) [AF](#) [BE](#)  
SUBJECT: GOB NOT EAGER TO SEE ISAF ROLE EXPANDED TO  
COUNTER-NARCOTICS

REF: STATE 97395

Classified By: Acting ECON/POL Chief Elizabeth Ewing, reason 1.4(b) and  
(d).

(C) Poloff delivered reftel demarche concerning expanding ISAF Op Plan responsibilities to counternarcotics interdiction missions to Pieter Vandavelde of the MFA's NATO office. Vandavelde said that the prevailing view in the GOB is that NATO should be careful about expanding the ISAF mission. He said the main concerns are 1) the idea of ISAF taking on a counternarcotics role runs counter to the goal of giving Afghans more of a role in the security of their country, 2) with collateral injury to civilians already a problem, counternarcotics missions open ISAF up to increased risk of mistakes that could lead to civilian casualties and 3) as far as Belgian troops are concerned, the new mission would exceed the narrowly defined authority granted to the Belgian military for Afghanistan. Poloff stressed that the vision for the new mission is for "opt-in" rather than "opt-out" to take account of national caveats. He also reminded Vandavelde of the large and growing narcotics production in Afghanistan and the low level of national ability to deal with the problem, which would justify a larger ISAF role in this area.

FOX

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